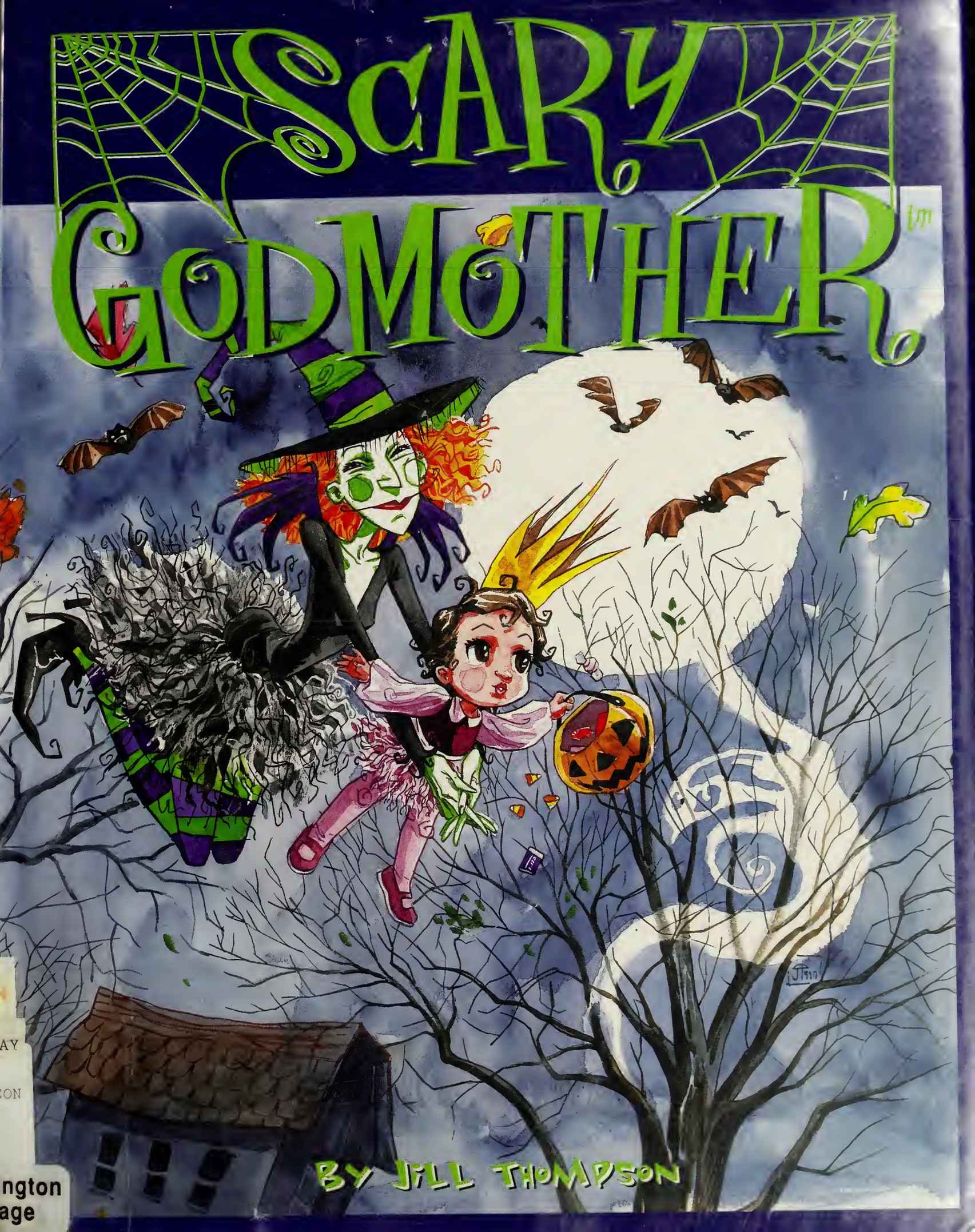
SCARY
GODMOTHER™
BY JILL THOMPSON

Welcome to the Fright Side! Come and join Hannah Marie on her very first Halloween adventure with her Scary Godmother. You'll meet Bugaboo, Scaredy Cat, Skully Pettibone and more, as Hannah Marie discovers just how much fun spooky can be!

This instant classic is the writing debut of popular SANDMAN illustrator Jill Thompson, who has also lavishly painted each page in her own unique and enchanting way. Whether you still go trick or treating or not, SCARY GODMOTHER is certain to live with you throughout the year! Suitable for readers of All Ages.

SCARY GODMOTHER

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dedicated
to
Hannah

It was probably the most exceptional Halloween night ever. The warm wind smelled softly of burning jack 'o lanterns and dry leaves as it pushed clouds across the rapidly darkening sky. All of this made Hannah Marie excited and impatient.

Tonight was the very first time Hannah would go trick-or-treating without her parents. She was going to go with the big kids. Her grandmother helped make her fairy princess costume with sequins on the wings. She even had a plastic pumpkin to hold her treats in.

Hannah was afraid of monsters- especially tonight. She was worried they would try and get her while she was trick-or-treating. Monsters abound on Halloween!

Just then, the doorbell rang! It was her older cousin, Jimmy, and his friends, Daryl, Bert and Katie. They had come to take her trick-or-treating with them. No monsters would dare touch her as long as she was with her cousin. He was big and a real scrapper!

A curfew was set before Hannah was allowed to leave.

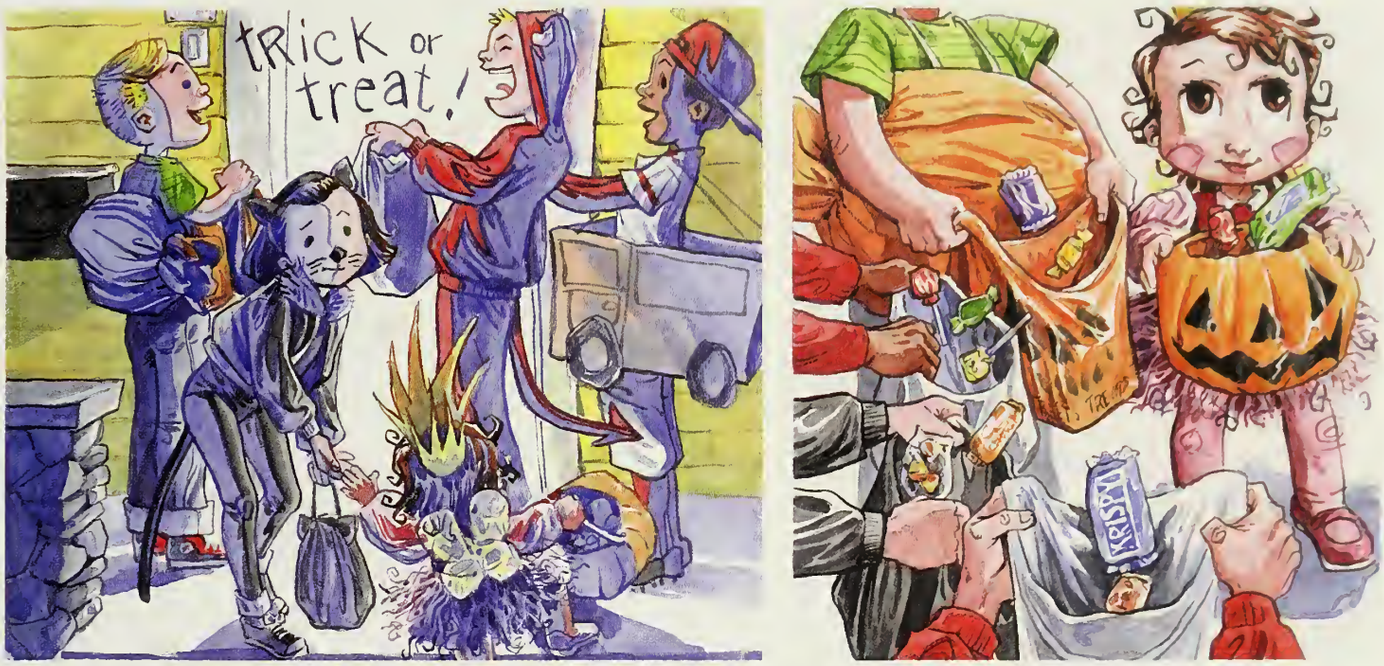
Hannah kissed her mom and dad good-bye and then ran down the sidewalk after the older children. Her first Halloween as a "big kid" had begun!

Jimmy whispered to his friends so Hannah and her parents couldn't hear.

Hannah's legs were much shorter than the others and she had to run sometimes to keep up with them. The big kids had to stop many times to wait for her.

Jimmy wished that his cousin wasn't with them.

They trick-or-treated down the whole block.



At house after house, their neighbors admired their costumes and loaded their bags with goodies.

I didn't want to bring that baby in the first place... my Mom made me!
She's slowing us down so much we'll never get to all the houses before we have to go home!

It was hard for Hannah to get up and down the stairs so Daryl, Bert and Katie stopped to help her. Not Jimmy though. He just stood by himself and grumbled.

Then suddenly, an idea popped into his head.

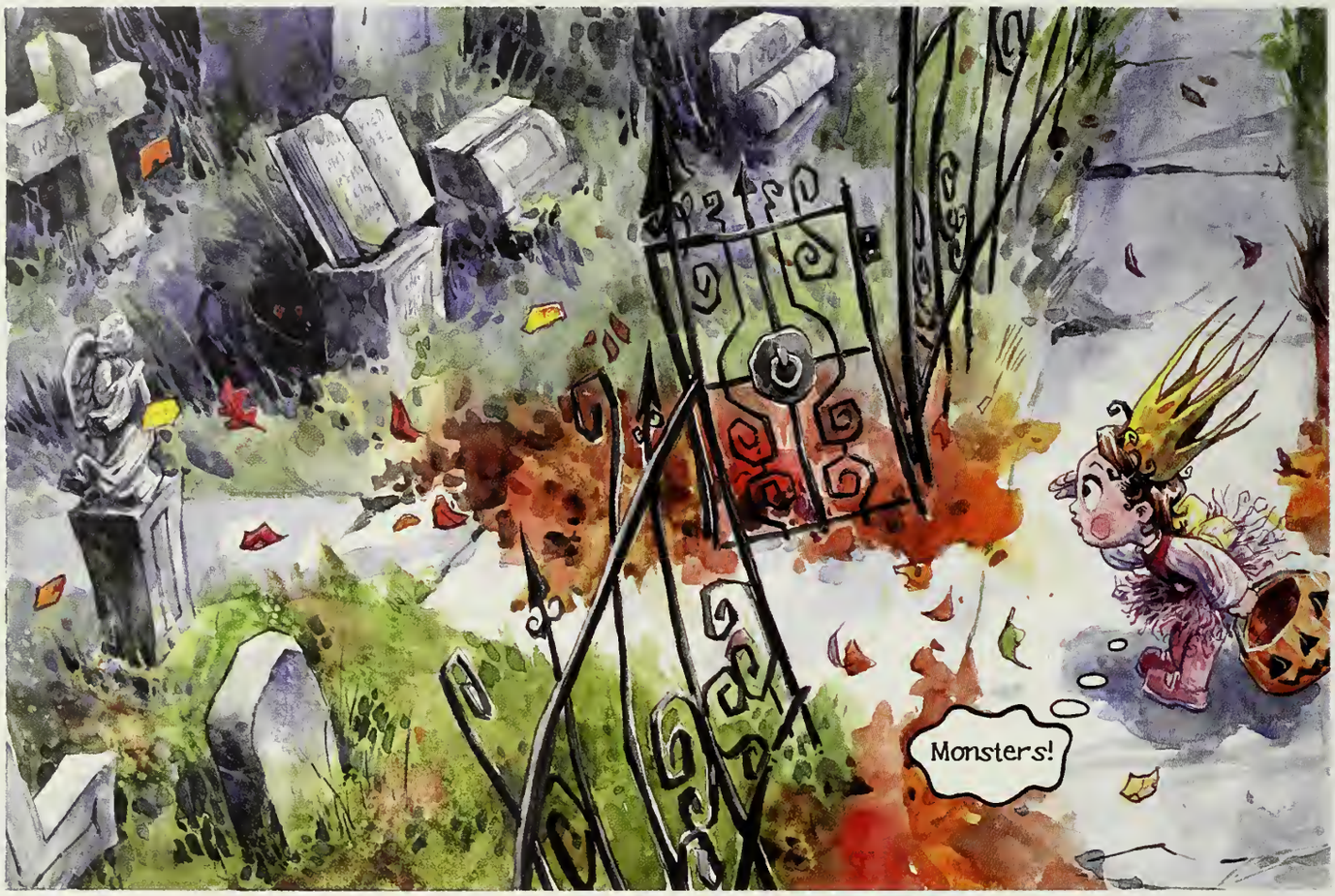
A nasty idea.

A nasty, mean, selfish and devilish idea.

While they marched onward, Jimmy filled the others in on his plans for Hannah. She followed behind, unaware that a very rotten trick was about to be played on her.

Soon they were walking down a street Hannah had never been on before. She thought about using her flashlight, but she trusted Jimmy and figured he'd protect her...

Further down the mysterious street they passed an old cemetery. Hannah was sure she saw a monster hiding in the weeds!



And even though her head was telling her to go home, her feet raced forward through the piles of leaves and down the crooked sidewalk to catch up with the others.

She finally caught up with them at the end of the street- the dead end! Jimmy and the others were peering around a big old tree at the creepiest house she had ever seen! Why had they stopped here, of all places?

Jimmy made up a story he was certain would frighten his cousin all the way back home.

You know why this house is for sale?
Years ago, on Halloween night just like tonight, the people who lived here forgot to leave candy for the hungry Monsters...

We...we're not really going into that house, are we Jimmy?
Of course not, Bert my man, I just said that to scare her. The baby'll turn and run home.

The big kids giggled and anxiously awaited for their trick to work... But much to everyone's surprise...

I can't believe it!
She went in!
Now what are you going to do?
You're gonna help me really scare her.

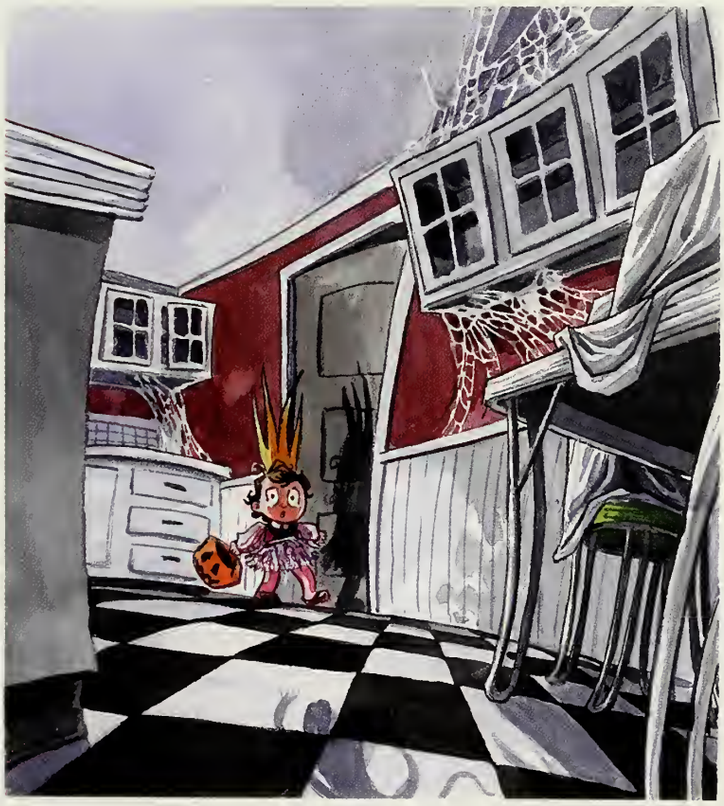
They tiptoed through the dark, dusty house. Jimmy pointed out imaginary monsters amongst the antiques and the others played along.

Woo! Woo! Don't be eaten up like us! Leave the candy! It's your only hope!
Hurry! I hear the skeletons rattling in the closet!
clack
clack
clack

Hannah's belly bubbled with fear as she followed them deeper and deeper into the house. She never knew being a big kid was so scary! Once she left some candy on the steps, they could leave.

The **Monster** in the Basement! Hannah closed her eyes, and threw some candy down the long, dark stairs.

When she opened her eyes, she found herself **alone**- in the **dark**- with the **Monsters**. The kids were **gone**! Had the Monsters gobbled them up? But why? She had given them candy...



She tried to be brave, but she couldn't hold out any longer- Hannah began to cry.

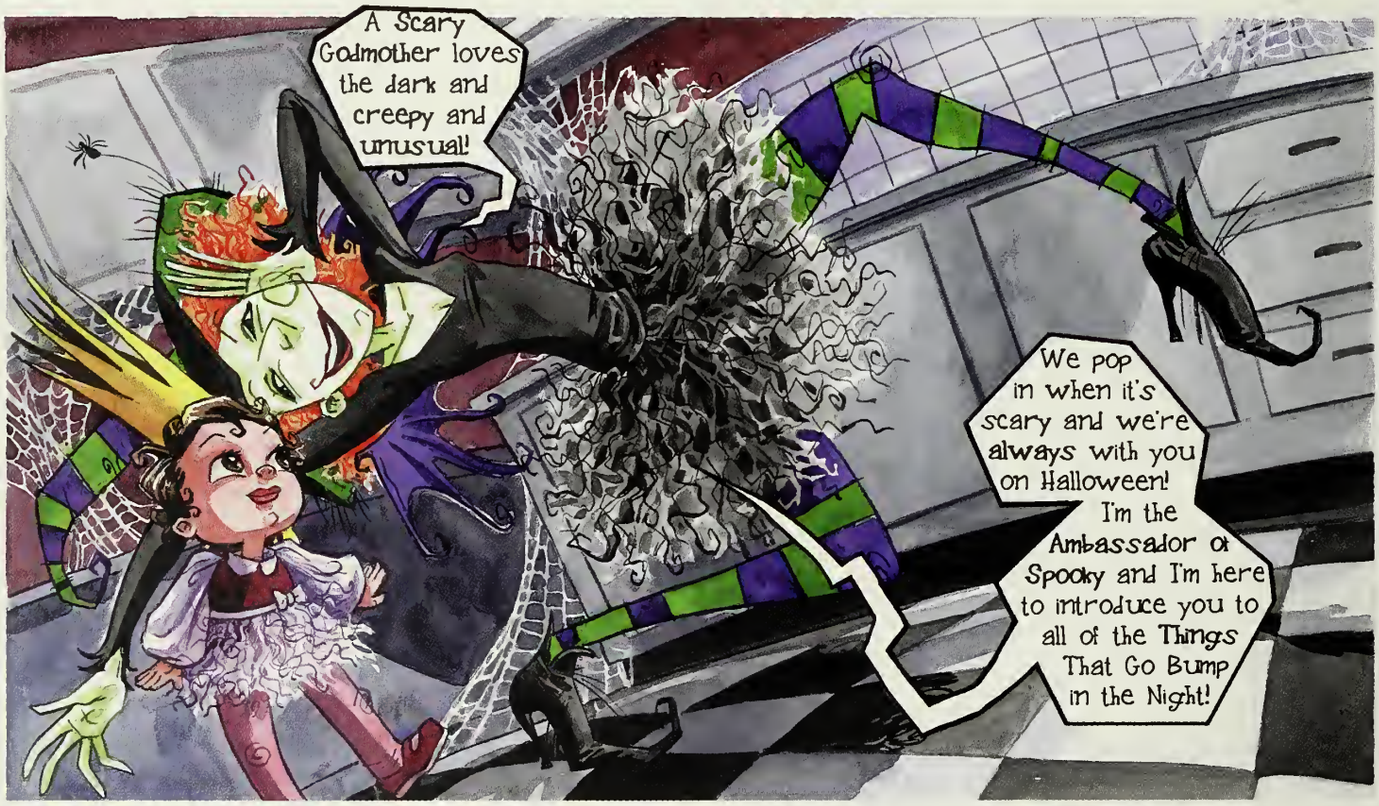
When, suddenly, out of the darkness came the sound of sobbing- much louder than her own!

Why would anybody be crying louder than a little girl left alone in a Spook House? Hannah choked back her tears and decided to find out.

Hey, lady- why are you crying?
Because I like the sound of Boo's in that Boo Hoo Hooing!
Hello, Hannah Marie-- I'm your...
Scary Godmother!
I'm here because you needed me!

The witchy lady bent down and laughed. She extended her hand and smiled big and wide!

Hannah Marie shook the long bony fingers that wiggled in front of her.


A Scary Godmother loves the dark and creepy and unusual!
We pop in when it's scary and we're always with you on Halloween! I'm the Ambassador of Spooky and I'm here to introduce you to all of the Things That Go Bump in the Night!

With a big laugh and a great smile, Hannah's Scary Godmother flapped her little bat wings and whisked them up the attic stairs to the top of the house!

The Scary Godmother knock knock knocked on the attic door. Wait a minute- nobody lived in the attic- did they?

It's polite to knock first, they might be snoozin'! Do you have any bats at home?
Bats? No- we have Betty. She's a dog. Bats will bite you.

What 'choo talkin' bout, Hannah?
Bert said bats would tangle my hair.
Oh yeah? Does he know any bats?
Um... baseball bats.

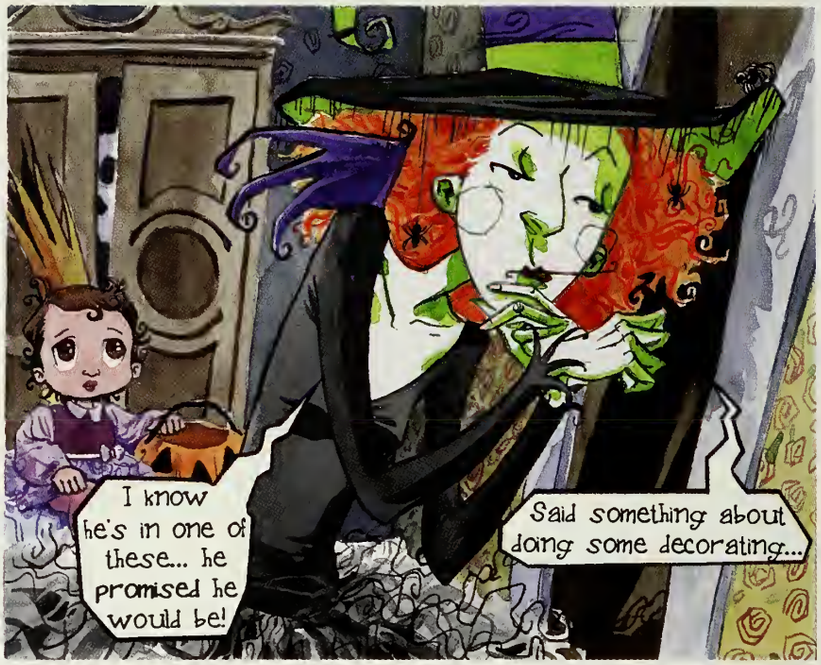
Hah! Well, there are over 900 varieties of us! Like-
The Horse-shoe Bat.
The Fruit Bat. Very foxy!
The Long-eared Bat.

We love to eat insects!
Or *burp* fruit!

Only the South American Vampire Bat feeds on blood.
Yucky!

By using a type of radar, we avoid flying into things in the dark- like your hair!
I see.

Having learned a bit about bats, the Scary Godmother then flew Hannah down the stairs, where she began knock knock knocking on the closet doors. Who could she be looking for?



Suddenly, a skeleton clacked out of the armoire behind them!

It was Skully Pettibone, a friend of Scary Godmother's! He worked in the closets of all of the old houses, keeping their secrets and occasionally rattling around. He sang the bone song while Hannah jumped up and down on the bed!

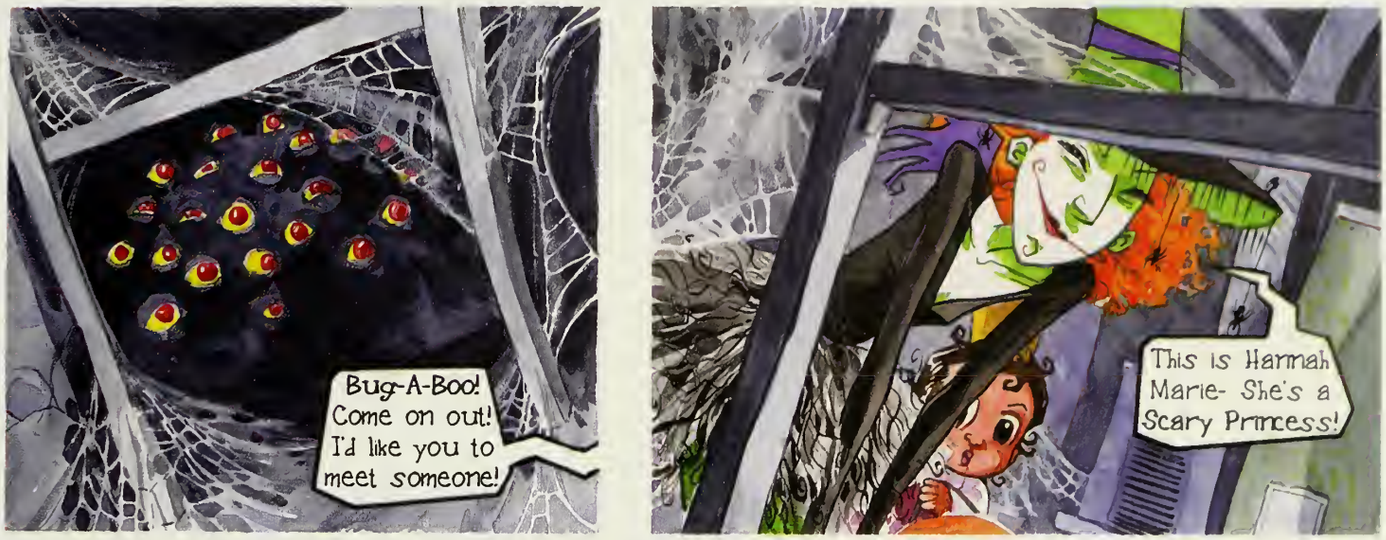
Their laughter woke Boozle, the Scary Godmother's Scaredy Cat, who rose out from under the bed to see what the commotion was all about. And before she knew it, Hannah Marie was a little girl who was no longer afraid of bats, ghosts, or clackety bones!

Then a gruff voice piped up from a heating vent down below.

Heaven forbid! It wouldn't be a party without you here!
Time to go to the basement!
Hey- you throwin' a party without me?
It sure is dark...
Sure is! Dank, moist and musty too! Isn't it wonderful?

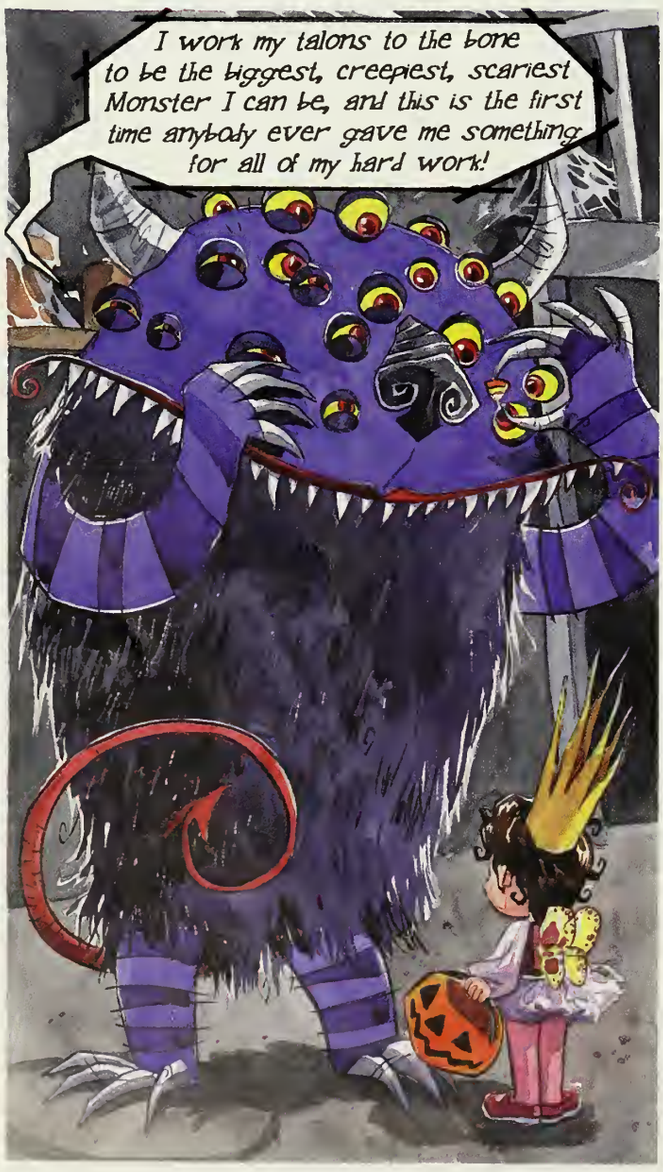
They all made their way down the creaky stairs. So, Hannah was finally going to meet the **Monster** in the Basement!

From out of the darkness under the stairs, glittering eyes popped out at them.



A Monster with horns and fur and claws shambled into the dim light of the basement. Its yellow eyes gleamed as it observed Hannah and a wide, toothy mouth cut its face into a grin!

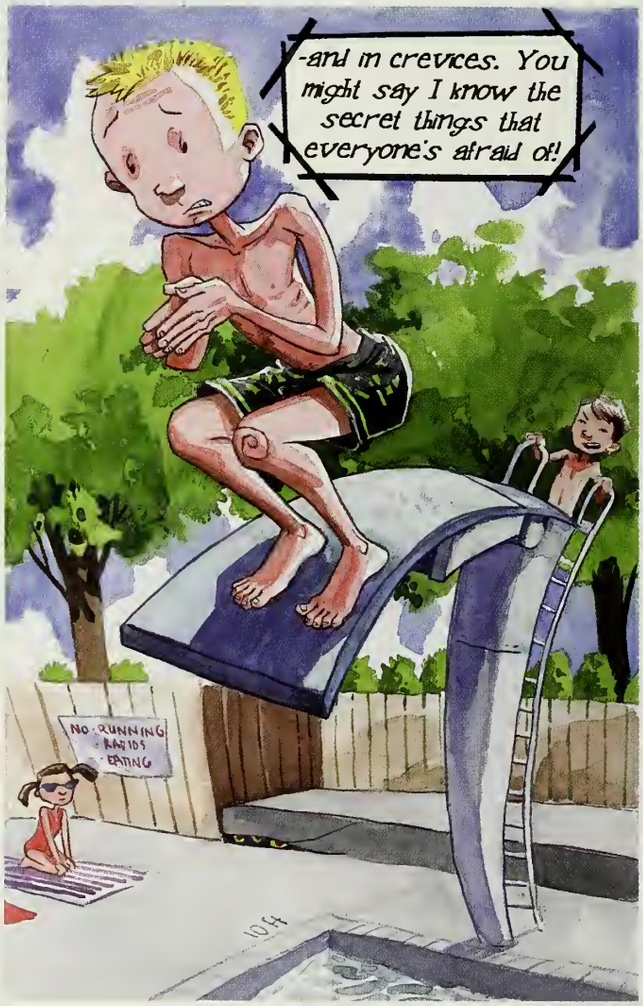
Remembering what Jimmy had told her, Hannah reached into her jack o' lantern and pulled out a candy to offer the beast.


I work my talons to the bone to be the biggest, creepiest, scariest Monster I can be, and this is the first time anybody ever gave me something for all of my hard work!

I've heard those kids outside laughin' about how they tricked you! It just ain't right!
They thought that if they ditched you they could get more candy!
But now they're too scared to do anything!

The big kids get scared?
Oh yeah, I know everything they're scared of.
How do you know that?
You kidding? It's my job! A guy like me spends a lot of time-
-under beds-
-and porches-

-and in closets-


-and in crevices. You might say I know the secret things that everyone's afraid of!
NO RUNNING NO DIVING NO EATING

And right now, it's no secret those kids are afraid of being punished! Listen!

Why did I listen to you! I'm gonna get grounded for sure!
I can't believe we left the baby in the Spook House!
My Mom's gonna whup my butt!

This is pathetic. You guys are bigger babies than Hannah!
C'mon. We'll just go back in an' get her.
Jeesh! She probably doesn't even know we left.
Here they come, Scary Godmother!
Well- I think it's time we taught them a lesson!
Here's the plan...

They warily crept back into the house, unaware that a Skeletal presence was spying on them.

Skully Pettibone clattered his bones with all the muscle-free might he could muster!

They scrambled away from the creature's bony grasp, but it rattled closer and closer...

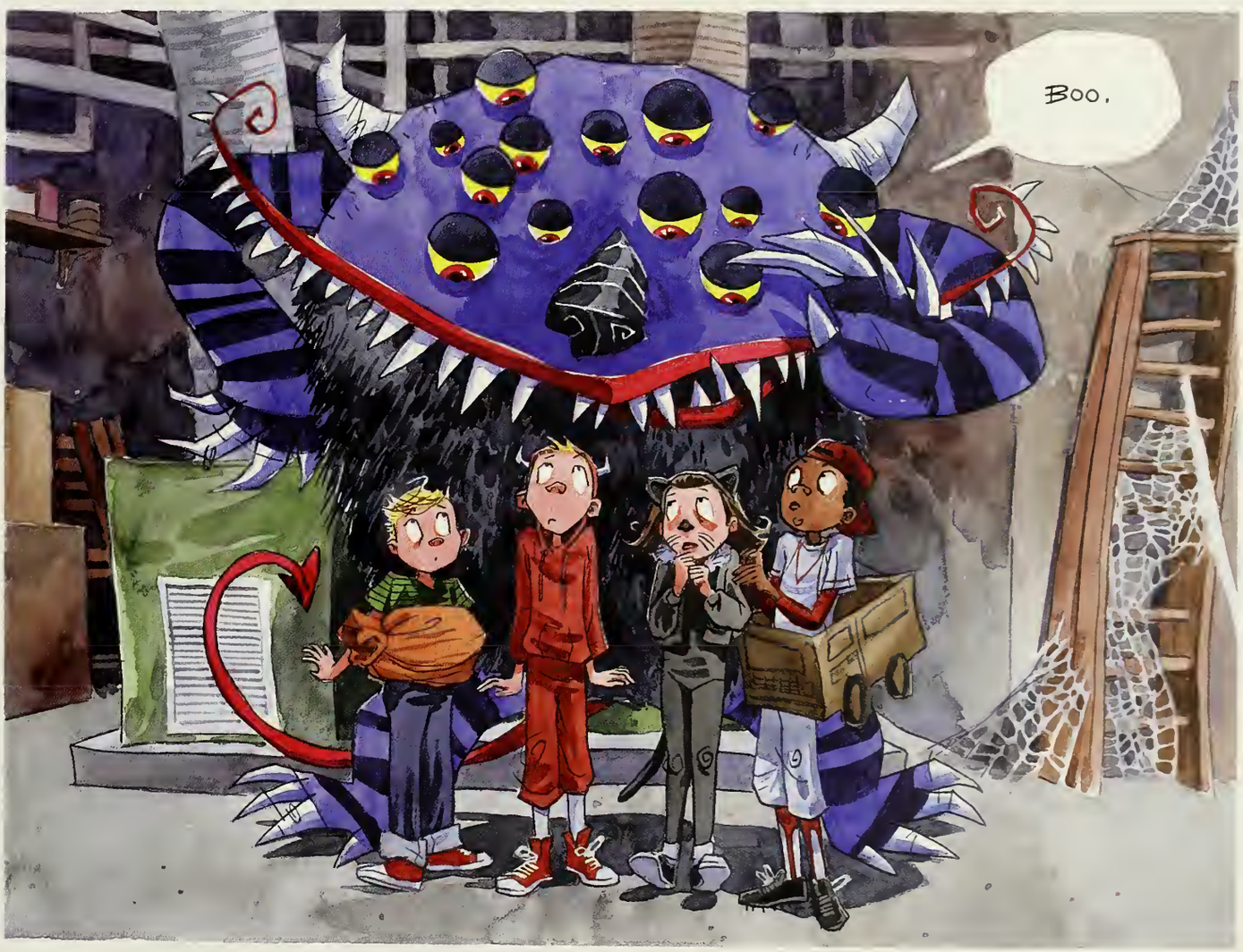
Too late! A great big ghostly beast let out a chilling "Meeooow" and blocked their way! They had no choice but to run deeper into the house!

A squadron of bats dove upon them and into the living room! Closing their eyes, they clamored screaming towards the kitchen, as the bats creepily squeaked in laughter.

Cornered! This was it... There was nowhere left to go but... the Basement!

The door slammed shut! Now they were alone... in the dark!

Then there was a rumbling- **no** it was **growling**, deep and throaty, seeping out of the inky darkness behind them. Then they felt a breezy draft- **no** it was **steamy**, **hot breath**, **huffing** and **puffing** down on their necks!



There **really** was a Monster in the Basement!

It was coming for them, licking its thick lips and baring its pointy teeth.

The Monster was going to gobble them up!

Suddenly- the Monster **screamed**!

It wiggled and jiggled on the floor, trying to escape from the bright beam of light!

Then- Poof! It vanished in a puff of acrid smoke! Pee-Yeeew!

They were **saved**! What brave-hearted **hero** had bested the toothy horror? A Policeman or Parents for sure! Looking up at the stairs, who do you think they saw?

Jimmy was **so** scared he tumbled up the stairs and **over** the others!

Big, Hairy, Sharp-toothed Monster!
Monsters?
I don't see any Monsters!
They're everywhere! Please use your flashlight and get us out of here!

Hannah **bravely** led the way out of the house that was now **crawling** with **spooks**! The beam of her light kept the creatures at bay.

Mmm! Tasty!
I like spicy food- gimme the red one!
I like mine fresh- right outta the box!
Eat the ears and tail and all!
Save the candy-coated one for dessert!

Protected by Hannah and her flashlight, the big kids ran howling out of the front door-leaving **all** of their **trick-or-treat** candy behind!

Hannah lingered in the doorway for a few moments with her new Halloween friends.

Hannah thanked them, one by one.

And she ran out the door into the pumpkiny air and bright moonlight.

The kids **promised** to make up for being so mean to her. When Jimmy delivered her home- at exactly 8 o' clock- her **jack 'o lantern** was overflowing with Halloween favors from the best trick-or-treat houses!

Later that night, tucked snug in her bed, Hannah thought of spooky things while drifting off to sleep. She couldn't wait until next Halloween when she could see the ghosts and monsters and her Scary Godmother again!

Maybe tonight, if she was lucky, she would have a really scary dream...

THE END

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Jill Thompson

Jill Thompson, a graduate of the American Academy of Art in downtown Chicago, has spent all of her adult life and most of her youth drawing comics, having worked as a professional since the ripe old age of fifteen. Over the years she has garnered critical acclaim on titles like THE SANDMAN, SWAMP THING and WONDER WOMAN. She still lives and works in Chicago, where she is currently developing new SCARY GODMOTHER stories.

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"The best use yet of Jill's wonderful painting and drafting skills, SCARY GODMOTHER is a brilliant example of where our medium can go. I couldn't be more jealous of the format and of Jill for showing us the way it can be done.
A beautiful and ambitious piece of work, just like the real Ms. Thompson herself."
– Alex Ross